

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----126573 052311Z /65
O 052233Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4420

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MONTEVIDEO 3024

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (TODMAN, TERENCE A), UY
SUBJ: TODMAN VISIT

1. I OFFER THE FOLLOWING THOUGHTS ON YOUR VISIT HERE
TO ADD A BIT OF SHADING TO THE BRIEFING MATERIAL AL-
READY PREPARED FOR YOU.

2. THE MOST INFLUENTIAL INDIVIDUALS YOU WILL BE
MEETING WILL BE THE CINCS OF THE ARMED FORCES
AND THE OTHER HIGH-RANKING MILITARY OFFICERS I BELIEVE
THE AUGUST 19 DINNER WILL ATTRACT. I SUGGESTED SUCH
A DINNER--DESPITE THE PREFERENCE YOU INDICATED TO ME
FOR A LIMIT ON GOVERNMENTAL CONTACTS--BECAUSE I
LEARNED THAT THE HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL POLITICAL COM-
MITTEE OF THE ARMED FORCES (INCLUDING GENERAL GREGORIO
ALVAREZ) WANTED AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH YOU THAT
EVENING. ALONG WITH THE CINCS THEY REPRESENT THE
KEY OFFICERS IN THE DIFFUSE DECISION-MAKING MACHINERY
OF THE GOU.

2. YOUR MEETING WITH THE CINCS AND THE OTHER HIGH-
RANKING MILITARY OFFICERS WILL BE THE MOST DIFFICULT
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AND POTENTIALLY THE MOST REWARDING. THEY FEEL COMFORT-
ABLE IN THE ROLE OF THE BETRAYED AND MISUNDERSTOOD AND
CAN BE EXPECTED TO FAULT THE CONGRESS AND THE DEPART-
MENT FOR FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND THE REAL SITUATION HERE.
THEY ALSO PERSIST IN THE BELIEF THAT WE DO NOT SPEAK
WITH ONE VOICE AS A GOVERNMENT. IF YOU CAN MOVE THEM
TO COMPREHEND THAT OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP CAN IMPROVE

ONLY IF THEY ADOPT MEASURES TO IMPROVE THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE, WE MAY GAIN AN OPENING WE CAN PURSUE IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. IT WON'T BE EASY. IT IS MORE COMFORTABLE FOR THEM TO FOLLOW THE TIME-HONORED URUGUAYAN TRADITION OF DUCKING TOUGH DECISIONS THAN TO TAKE PAINFUL POSITIVE STEPS IN THE DIRECTION OF IMPROVING THE OBSERVANCE OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS. WE DO HAVE SOME INDICATIONS THAT A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, INCLUDING SOME OF THE MILITARY, BELIEVE THAT A RECONCILIATION WITH THE U.S. IS IN URUGUAY'S BEST INTEREST. THEY MAY BE ABLE TO CONVINCE OTHERS THAT YOUR VISIT OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BEGIN THAT PRECESS.

3. HENCE, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT DURING YOUR VISIT YOU MAY BE ASKED HOW URUGUAY CAN IMPROVE ITS INTERNATIONAL IMAGE. YOU CAN CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING APPROACH:

A) BEGIN BY ASSURING THEM THAT IT IS WIDELY RECOGNIZED AND APPRECIATED THAT THE URUGUAYAN ARMED FORCES BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL A TUPAMARO MOVEMENT WHICH HAD TRAUMATIZED THEIR SOCIETY--AND THEY DESERVE PRAISE FOR THEIR EFFORT.

B) NOTE THAT THE INFRINGEMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS LED TO AN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC REACTION WHICH WAS NOT--AS THEY CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTEND--PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST CONSPIRACY, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY FROM RESPECTED GROUPS SUCH AS AI AROUND THE WORLD WHICH ARE SENSITIVE TO INFRINGEMENTS OF PERSONAL LIBERTY.

C) INDICATE THAT THEY MUST TAKE STEPS TO PROVE TO THE WORLD OPINION THAT THE GOU IS BEGINNING TO OBSERVE INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED PRACTICES FOR DEALING WITH SUBVERSION AND TERRORISM, AND THAT THIS CAN NOW BE DONE WITHOUT ENDANGERING THE PUBLIC ORDER.

D) AND FINALLY, NOTE THAT ONLY THROUGH THEIR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THEIR INTERNATIONAL IMAGE THROUGH POSITIVE ACTS CAN WE MOVE TO IMPROVE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP.

4. IF DRAWN INTO OFFERING SPECIFIC ACTIONS THEY CAN TAKE, YOU MIGHT SUGGEST THAT THEY:

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O 052233Z AUG 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4421

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MONTEVIDEO 3024

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

A) DEVELOP SOME INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM WHICH
WILL PERMIT THEM TO RESPOND QUICKLY TO REQUESTS MADE
ON BEHALF OF DETAINEES, REGARDLESS OF THE REASONS FOR
WHICH THESE PERSONS WERE DETAINED.

B) EMULATE WHAT HAS BEEN DONE BY SOME OF THEIR
NEIGHBORS, E.G. RELEASE SOME DETAINEES CHARGED WITH
LESSER CRIMES, ALLOW SOME DETAINEES TO SELECT EXILE
RATHER THAN SERVE TIME IN PRISON.

C) MAKE A PUBLIC ACCOUNTING OF ALL PRISONERS,
INDICATING TIME OF ARREST, CHARGES LEVELED AGAINST
THEM, THE HEARINGS, THE TRIAL, SENTENCING, ETC. (THIS
WOULD AMOUNT TO A GOU PUBLIC ANSWER TO AI'S ESTIMATE
THAT THERE ARE FOUR TO FIVE THOUSAND POLITICAL PRISONERS
IN URUGUAY.)

D) INVITE A RESPECTED, IMPARTIAL BODY SUCH AS
THE INTER'AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION TO MAKE
AN IN-COUNTRY SURVEY.

E) AND, FINALLY, BEGIN REMOVING FROM THE BOOKS
ALL THE UNNECESSARY RESTRICTIVE LEGISLATION REGARDING
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POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND CRIMES AGAINST THE STATE.

5. THE OTHERS YOU WILL MEET OFFER OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OF A MIXED CHARACTER. YOUR MEETING WITH ROVIRA IS STRICTLY PROTOCOLARY. HE DOES NOT WIELD REAL POWER AND APPEARS ON HIS WAY OUT. HE MOST PROBABLY WILL DEFEND URUGUAY'S POSITION ALONG THE LINES HE ADVANCED AT GRENADA, BUT WITHOUT GREAT ENTHUSIASM. PRESIDENT MENDEZ UNDOUBTEDLY HAS SOME LIMITED INFLUENCE IN THIS CONFUSING GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE. THE GENERAL TONE OF YOUR MEETING WITH HIM MORE THAN LIKELY WILL BE SET BY THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER.

6. THE MEETING WITH THE ECONOMIC TEAM MAY ALSO TOUCH ON HUMAN RIGHTS BECAUSE AIR FORCE BRIGADIER JOSE CARDOZO, HEAD OF THE SECRETARIAT OF PLANNING, COORDINATION, AND INFORMATION, MAY BRING UP THE SUBJECT AND RELATE IT TO POSSIBLE ECONOMIC SANCTIONS. HE HAS BEEN AN ACTIVE GOVERNMENTAL SPOKESMAN ON HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS AND HAS BEEN SHARPLY CRITICAL OF THE U.S.

7. THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE, DR. HAMLET REYES, IS BASICALLY FRIENDLY TOWARD THE U.S. ALTHOUGH HE OCCUPIES A HIGH POSITION IN THE GOU, HE HAS NOT HESITATED TO CRITICIZE THE GOU PRIVATELY. YOU WILL ENJOY EQUAL CANDOR IN YOUR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE TWO COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE.

8. THE COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAS IS COMPOSED OF FOURTEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF MAJOR AMERICAN BUSINESS FIRMS ESTABLISHED IN URUGUAY. MOST OF ITS MEMBERS HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY.

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9. THE PROPOSED BREAKFAST MEETING WITH VEGH VILLEGAS SHOULD BE A HIGH POINT, PROVIDED HE ACCEPTS. YOU CAN SPEAK FRANKLY WITH HIM AND HE WILL RESPOND WITH EQUAL FRANKNESS.
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